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CABINET APPROVES ROYALTY RATES FOR LITHIUM, TWO OTHER MINERALS

The Centre on Wednesday said it has approved royalty rates of 3 per cent each for lithium and niobium and 1 per cent for Rare Earth Elements

LITHIUM, NIOBIUM BLOCKS CAN BE AUCTIONED

This approval will enable the Centre to auction lithium, niobium and Rare Earth Elements blocks for the first time in the country. The royalty rate on minerals is an important financial consideration for bidders during auction of mines. The Centre prepared the method for calculating average sale price of these minerals, which will allow determining of bid parameters | **P15**

PLATFORM TO HELP YOUTH ON GOVT SCHEMES

- The Cabinet also approved the establishment of an autonomous body—*Mera Yuva Bharat* (MY Bharat)—to serve as an overarching enabling mechanism to ensure youth-led development
- MY Bharat will help integrate different govt schemes related to the youth, Union minister Anurag Thakur said | **P11**

27%

OF POPULATION IN THE 15-29 YEAR AGE GROUP TO BENEFIT FROM MY BHARAT

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Parties bury the hatchet to go after Hamas; India launches Op Ajay for those who wish to return home from Israel

Gaza powerless; Oppn joins Israel wartime cabinet

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

AMID intense fightback against the massacre by Hamas, Israel's deeply fractured polity demonstrated rare political unity as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and opposition leader Benny Gantz on Wednesday agreed to create a wartime cabinet to give the terrorists a fitting response.

The new wartime cabinet will consist of Netanyahu, former defence minister Gantz, and current defence minister Yoav Gallant. The new Cabinet will only deal with the war. The rest of the existing cabinet of the ruling coalition comprising far-right and ultra-Orthodox representatives, will function as usual.

Not the entire opposition is on the same page yet, as Israel's main opposition leader, Yair Lapid, is yet to give his consent to join the war cabinet.

The Gaza Strip ruled by Hamas is already powerless as its lone power plant is out of fuel with little scope for replenishment due to Israel's blockade of the 40 km-long strip wedged within Israel, Egypt and the Mediterranean Sea.

Israeli airstrikes demolished entire neighbourhoods in Gaza that has a population of 2.3 million. Besides, nine UN staffers in Palestine have been killed in retaliatory Israeli airstrikes on Gaza. Hamas fighters have an estimated 150 hostages, including soldiers, women and children and the elderly.

There was still some fighting reported in Israel. Its troops swept every house in Gaza border communities of Kibbutz Be'eri and Re'im to flush out Hamas fighters. In Be'eri, they killed 108 Hamas men.

Hamas claimed Israeli airstrikes on the family house of Mohammad Deif, the leader of Hamas's military wing, killed his father, brother and at least two other relatives in the southern town of Khan Younis.

Back home, India established a control room for its citizens in both Israel and Palestine (see box). Later in the day, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar announced the launch of Operation Ajay to facilitate the return from Israel of those Indians who wish to come home. "Launching #OperationAjay to facilitate the return from Israel of our citizens who wish to return," Jaishankar posted on X. "Special charter flights and other arrangements being put in place. Fully committed to the safety and well-being of our nationals abroad," he said.

Nepal, Norway, Sweden and Denmark, too, are preparing to evacuate their nationals. P14

An Israeli army's self-propelled howitzer in action near the Gaza border on Wednesday. The toll in Israel from the Hamas massacre has surged past 1,200 following the worst attack in the country's 75-year history | AFP

INDIAN HELPLINES IN TEL AVIV, RAMALLAH

India has set up helplines in Tel Aviv and Ramallah. The phone numbers at the Delhi control room are 1800118797 (Toll free), +91-11 23012113, +91-11-23014104, +91-11-23017905m +919968291988. The email is situationroom@mea.gov.in. The helpline of the Embassy of India in Tel Aviv can be accessed on +97235226748, +972-543278392 and email cons1.telaviv@mea.gov.in. The contact details in Ramallah are: +970-592916418 (also WhatsApp), rep.ramallah@mea.gov.in (email). Indian nationals in Israel include about 900 students, caregivers for elders, diamond traders and IT professionals

TALKS ON OVER SAFE CIVILIAN PASSAGE: U.S.

The US is in active talks to allow for safe passage out of Gaza for civilians, White House National Security spokesman John Kirby said Wednesday. "We are having active conversations about trying to allow for that safe passage. It's the civilians who did nothing wrong so we want to make sure they have a way out," Kirby said. meanwhile, Arab foreign ministers called for an immediate ceasefire between Israel and Hamas. The call came in a statement after their meeting at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo, which was called by the Palestinians to discuss the war. It condemned the killing of civilians on both sides and called for the release of all detainees held by Israel or Hamas

NO JUSTIFICATION FOR BRUTALITY: URSULA

Lighting into Hamas for its brutality, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in a hard-hitting statement said, "There can be no justification for Hamas' act of terror. This has nothing to do with the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinian people. The horror that Hamas has unleashed will bring more suffering upon innocent Palestinians. Only Hamas is responsible for its actions." These innocents were killed for for one single reason — they were Jewish and lived in Israel, she said. "We have to be clear in defining this kind of horror. It is terrorism. And it is an act of war."

Pathankot attack kingpin gunned down in Pakistan

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

UPA GOVT RELEASED LATIF FROM PRISON

Latif, who spent 16 years in Indian jail was released by UPA as a goodwill gesture in 2010. After release, he was deported to Pakistan via Wagah border. He played a main role in organising the Pathankot attack that killed seven airmen when four terrorists sneaked into the airbase. The siege went on for three days

INDIA'S most wanted terrorist Shahid Latif of the Jaish-e-Mohammad, who was the mastermind of the 2016 Pathankot Air Force Station attack, was shot dead by three gunmen outside a mosque at Daska town in Sialkot of Pakistan. He was wanted by the National Investigative Agency (NIA) in an Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) case.

Three motorcycle-borne men fired indiscriminately killing Latif, who was coming out of the mosque after prayers. His brother Haris Hashim was also killed on the spot and another person was injured, said sources, and added that Latif had been involved in planning, facilitation and execution of terror attacks in India. Latif, 53, was also known as Bilal alias Noor Al Din.

He had infiltrated into the Kashmir valley in 1993 and was arrested in 1994 from Jammu. Latif was in the Jammu jail with Masood Azhar, founder of Jaish, till 2010.

He played a pivotal role in orchestrating the Pathankot attack on January 2, 2016 where seven IAF personnel were killed after four Jaish terrorists sneaked into the airbase. The siege went on for three days.

Latif hailed from Aminabad in Gujranwala of Punjab in Pakistan and he was charge-sheeted by NIA along with Jaish founder Masood Azhar for carrying out the attack on the Pathankot airbase. In its chargesheet, the NIA had stated that Latif along with other Jaish members shared the map of the airbase with the attackers and said the base was vulnerable due to its location around forests.

Latif was among those whose release was sought by the hijackers of the Indian Airlines flight IC814 in 1999. The demand was rejected.

FUND FLOW

CBI's turn to go after NewsClick editor, claims it violated FCRA

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

AFTER the Enforcement Directorate, it was the CBI's turn on Wednesday to raid *NewsClick* founder-editor Prabir Purkayastha's office and residence over alleged violation of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act.

The CBI in a statement said, "It was alleged that the said private company had received unexplained export remittance of ₹28.46 crore through four foreign entities in violation of FCRA provisions and there was also an unexplained receipt of foreign fund of ₹9.59 crore by incorrect characterisation of the fund as FDI."

The FIR has also named American billionaire Neville Roy Singham, who runs an IT consultancy firm. *NewsClick* in a post said CBI is the fifth agency that is investigating it and denied all allegations against it.

The Delhi Police in its case against the portal had alleged that the funds were infused into *NewsClick* by a member of Communist Party of China and Neville Roy Singham.

NewsClick had hit the headlines after the *New York Times* reported that it received funds from Singham for allegedly running pro-Chinese propaganda. The Delhi Police Special Cell had on October 3 arrested Purkayastha and the human resources department head of the portal, Amit Chakravarty, in a case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

CROSSING A HURDLE

Samajawadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav in Lucknow on Wednesday climbs a closed gate to offer floral tribute to the statute of Jai Prakash Narayan on his birth annivesary. Officials denied permission to enter the Jai Prakash International Centre citing construction work | **P11**

No clarity on 41 Canadian diplomats leaving India

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

HAVE any of the 41 'excess' Canadian diplomats been posted out yet after India insisted on parity? While earlier reports suggested some of them have been evacuated or shifted out, London's *Financial Times* claimed no Canadian diplomat has left India so far.

Both the Ministry of External Affairs and the Canadian High Commission in New Delhi refrained from making any comments.

The UK daily also claimed that External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar held talks with his Canadian counterpart Melanie Joly in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly to resolve bilateral differences after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau had alleged India's involvement in the killing Khalistani extremist Hardeep Singh Nijjar.

"We want parity as Canadian diplomats are seen interfering in our internal matters. Therefore, we would like the Canadian missions to downsize," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi had said earlier.

Meanwhile, Trudeau has been making phone calls to various heads of state — including British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, Jordanian king Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein and UAE President Mohamed Bin Zayed. He mentioned the Nijjar killing in all his conversations and spoke about the India-Canada diplomatic row.

Gold prices skyrocket as conflict rages in West Asia

ASHWINI M SRIPAD @ Bengaluru

GOLD prices have been skyrocketing ever since the conflict between Israel and Hamas began in West Asia. This is happening ahead of the festive season in India — Dasara in October and Deepavali in November — when more people buy gold as these months are considered auspicious.

The gold price, which is Rs 58,680 for 10gm (24 carat), is likely to touch Rs 70,000 soon.

Likewise, the price of 22 carat gold, which has now crossed Rs 53,000 for 10gm, might go up to Rs 60,000 in the coming days. "Any war will have an impact on gold prices. We are expecting this to last for a few weeks. This apart, the interest rate hike in the US also pushed the prices of yellow metal up," according to TA Saravana, president of Karnataka Gold Jewelers' Association.

CA Surendra Mehta, national secretary of India Bullion

and Jewellers' Association, attributed the increasing prices of gold to the conflict in West Asia. In fact, gold prices, which saw a downward trend a few days ago, started shooting up with the conflict in West Asia continuing, he said.

He said whenever there is geopolitical trouble or trade tension, investors prefer to invest in gold as the equity market will be down. Gold is the only commodity whose prices remain stable despite economic upheavals, and with a speculation, investors invest in the yellow metal. CONTINUED ON: P7

15-member panel to draft SEP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

THE state government, which had announced that it will scrap the National Education Policy (NEP) and introduce a State Education Policy (SEP), on Wednesday issued an order constituting a 15-member State Education Policy Commission headed by former UGC chairman Sukhdev Thorat.

The government has also identified eight subject experts/advisors, including activist and psephologist Prof Yogendra Yadav, to help draft the SEP. The commission has been asked to submit its report by February 28, 2024. The commission will make policy suggestions to the government to improve the quality of education and its accessibility to the people of Karnataka.

The report will be curated based on data from the latest national sample survey on schools and higher education for Karnataka, all India survey on higher education along with data from the state education department, National Informatics Centre and District Information Centre, the order stated.

The commission will also survey selected universities and colleges and obtain feedback from vice-chancellors, college principals, association of universities, colleges, teachers and students, and educational experts. The commission can co-opt experts as invitees/members during the course of discussions, whenever required. CONTINUED ON: P3

PENDING BILLS

Belagavi PWD contractor attempts suicide

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Belagavi

A 42-year-old contractor allegedly attempted suicide by drinking poison in front of the PWD office here on Wednesday. Nagappa Ballappa Bangi, a resident of Kumarswamy Layout in Belagavi, is said to have attempted suicide as the PWD authorities did not clear his pending bills.

Bangi alleged that the authorities haven't cleared bills amounting to Rs 6.5 lakh for the road maintenance work done in 2022. After staging a dharna along with his family members, Bangi told reporters that though he approached the authorities several times, they did not clear his bills. He accused PWD assistant executive engineers Ramesh Hegde and Basavaraj Halagi of harassing him.

Bangi drank poison in front of executive engineer SS Sobarad. Soon, he was rushed to the district hospital. The doctors there said Bangi's condition is stable. An official said the Bangi's bills were kept pending due to the defects in his work.

EXPRESS READ

K'taka told to give 3k cusecs to TN for 15 days

Chennai: In a setback for Karnataka, the Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC) on Wednesday directed the state to release 3,000 cusecs of water to Tamil Nadu for 15 days more, from October 16 to October 31. This was despite objection from Karnataka government which said the state is facing drought-like condition due to deficit monsoon in the Cauvery basin. "In monsoon deficit year, based on availed data, we have to distribute water on pro rata basis," said Vineet Gupta, member, CWRC | **P4**

BBMP is enemy no. 1 of B'luru, says K'taka HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

ORALLY observing that Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is the enemy no. 1 of the city, the Karnataka High Court on Wednesday directed the Palike to conduct a survey of hoardings, boards and flexes erected in its limits and submit details regarding permission granted, fee collected, and action taken against the violators in the past three years.

The court directed the Palike to proceed on show cause notices issued to officials who failed to curb illegal hoardings in the city. The court asked it to submit a report to it on the action taken on November 28.

A division bench of Chief Justice Prasanna B Varale and Justice Krishna S Dixit passed the order after going through data on the penalty collected and number of show cause notices issued over illegal advertisements. P3